

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 were pending in the present application. Claims 10-17 and 24-30 are withdrawn from consideration pending the allowance of a generic claim. Claims 1-5, 18, and 19 have been canceled herein. Thus claims 6-17 and 20-31 are pending in the present application. Reconsideration of the present application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation acknowledgement of the claim for priority made under section 119 and notice that all certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

Applicants also note the receipt of an initialed copy of form PTO-1449, on which the examiner has indicated consideration by initialing all listed items.

Claims 1-5, 7-9, 18, 19, 21-23 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Sato, et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,424,395, (hereinafter "Sato"). Claims 1-5, and 18, 19 are cancelled and claims 7-9 and 21-23 are amended to depend from claim 6 as rewritten in independent form.

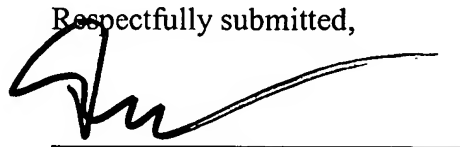
Accordingly, claims 7-9 and 21-23, as amended, by virtue of depending from claims 6 and 20 respectively, are believed allowable since they now depend from claims indicated allowable. It is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 7-9 and 21-23 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

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In view of the foregoing, the applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and a timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Please charge any unforeseen fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert L. Scott, II
Reg. No. 43,102

Posz & Bethards, PLC
11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 10
Reston, VA 20190
Phone 703-707-9110
Fax 703-707-9112
Customer No. 23400